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Manu in India to observe the irrational development which the publication of the Roman law in the twelve tables prevented it from acquiring. Likewise it may be doubted whether his comparison of the government of Carthage to that of Venice in the later days of that republic has real illustrative value to the students.

His only illustrations drawn from American institutions are certainly not likely to please the American youth, for he declares that the Romans developed a system of electoral corruption which can only be paralleled in the elections of America, and that Clodius organized an army of disorder and corruption which might move the envy of a modern American "ward politician" or "political boss."

The book is furnished with neither marginal dates nor bibliographies, but a useful appendix is given, in which are presented a list of the chief dates and separate chronologies of the "Struggle between the Orders," of "Rome's Power in Italy," of the "Growth of the Provincial System," of the "Extension of Roman Privileges," and of the "Decay of Senatorial Authority." In these lists the date 204 B. C. is given for the close of the second Punic war, but otherwise accuracy prevails.

For those able and willing to supplement from other sources this narrative of Rome's most characteristic activities, war and government, with an account of the religious beliefs and customs, the literature and other interests of this people, Wells' book will be found useful.

WAYLAND J. CHASE

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*Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Selections.* By HIRAM CORSON, LL.D.,  
Professor of English Literature in the Cornell University.  
\$.90. The Macmillan Co.

THE constant improvement in the newer text-books for students along lines indicated by the best pedagogical thought has been greatest in books on English, more particularly literature — perhaps because there was greatest need for advance here. Literature is no longer treated as a mere vehicle for grammar. Too many teachers of English in the past, following closely the lead of their text-books, have given their students a knowledge of Shakespeare and of Milton of the same nature as that gained from the exercises in a district school parsing book; all the inspiration, all the cultivation of a love for beauty in its

finest sense, all the refined and pure enjoyment coming from a proper study of great masterpieces has been repressed by undue attention to inflections and etymologies. This method of teaching literature is easy; the instructor needs but a knowledge of a few facts.

Professor Corson is not one of these teachers. His scholarship is of the ripest; but he is more than scholarly, he is delicately sensible to literary beauty and has the power to kindle enthusiastic appreciation of the same in others. In this he is a teacher of the truest kind, and any book coming from him can be regarded as of great worth. His *Aims of Literary Study* is a noble effort to enforce the idea of the value of the study of literature as *literature*; and his *Introduction to Browning* is a most inspiring incentive to a beginner in Browning. He has again laid teachers of literature under obligations to him in his recent edition of selections from *Canterbury Tales*, prepared as "an introduction to the study of Chaucer as a poet rather than as a writer of fourteenth century English."

The short biography of the poet which Professor Corson has given is not a careless compilation of traditional matter, nor does it contain rash conclusions based on flimsy evidence, but is a sensible work showing painstaking investigation and careful judgment. For instance, instead of insisting, because wishing to believe, that Chaucer visited Petrarch at Padua, as is frequently stated, Professor Corson says, "It would be a pleasant fact, if it could be established as a fact, that these two poets met; but conclusive testimony thereto is wanting."

There are, too, the necessary explanations of the grammar, but they are short and clear. Pronunciation is dealt with most sensibly. While admitting that Chaucer's exact pronunciation may never be known, the professor insists that "anyone who . . . has attained a fluent . . . reading of Chaucer's verse, according to an approximate pronunciation of the time . . . certainly gets a flavor therefrom not afforded by modern English pronunciation." The table of sounds, however, contains an unusual statement that *er* must have been frequently sounded as *er* in *sergeant*.

The notes are really interesting; partly because they are not solutions to philological problems and ponderous with quotations from a score of languages, and partly because they are comments such as beginners in literature find valuable. One of the novel statements is that French of Stratford-at-Bow was good, perhaps superior to Parisian.

There are chapters on the features of Chaucer's poetry and on the versification.

The glossary presents one minor but extremely useful aid to beginners; every different grammatical form is inserted under a separate entry.

The selections contain a wider range than any edition I know. The prologue and five tales, including the Knights, are given practically complete, and there are portions of eleven other prologues and tales, all chosen "to represent Chaucer at his best, both as a story-teller and as a poet."

Certainly this is the most satisfactory text-book I have seen to inspire a beginner with a love of the "morning star of song."

GEORGE M. MARSHALL

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*A First Book in Writing English.* By EDWIN HERBERT LEWIS.  
New York and Chicago: The Macmillan Company.

THIS book gives the impression of being carefully finished and fitted for its purpose. Very simple and practical in arrangement and design, it is point by point obviously the outcome of a finer process of cerebration than most of its competitors in the field. Dr. Lewis has a delicate feeling, which amounts to an instinct, for the interest and ambition of the developing mind; together with this there is manifest throughout a strong sense for the exact means and methods adopted and adequate to the education of the faculty of language and the art of speech in the student in the secondary stage. Other books designed for secondary schools cover in one way or another most of the same general topics, but none is at once so skillfully graded, planned so progressively, and so adequate and practical in its pedagogic method for the definite purpose for which it was intended.

The plan is inductive in so far that every rule is clinched with appropriate exercises (the fitness of these is one of the most skillful features of the book), and that the rationale of the rule is thence inferred and stated simply and briefly. Analysis and synthesis are everywhere joined on the same page. It is the sort of book which should stimulate students and aid teachers.

FREDERIC IVES CARPENTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO,  
July 1897